



PRESS RELEASE

USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63)
Public Affairs Office
FPO AP 96634-2770

E-mail: pao@kitty-hawk.navy.mil
Web: www.kittyhawk.navy.mil



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Kitty Hawk welcomes Thai guests

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Matthew Reinhardt, Kitty Hawk public affairs

KITTY HAWK, At Sea -- Sixteen senior Thai and American officials visited the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) as it sailed in the Gulf of Thailand Aug. 31.

Guests included U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Ralph L. Boyce and Royal Thai Army Commander in Chief, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin.

The visitors said they were very impressed with their time spent on Kitty Hawk.

“Being on a ship this large is a little overwhelming,” said Thomas White, vice president of the American International Assurance Company, which is based in Thailand. “It makes me feel very proud to see young American men and women working so hard for their country and making the sacrifices they’re making.

“Not many people get to see what their tax dollars go toward; it’s good to see that the government is putting that money to good use,” he said.

Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Fuels) Airman Nikorn Phetphouthay, a Thai-born sailor who recently gained American citizenship, was invited to speak with Boonyaratglin

“It was hard to grasp the fact that I was talking to such an important person. I was so nervous,” said Phetphouthay, who works as a gauge calibration assistant with Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department.

“Afterward I just couldn’t believe that I had just played a big part in ambassadorship,” he said. “I didn’t think I was that special. Just because I’m from Thailand, I get to go up to a Thai general and chit-chat.”

While with the U.S. Navy, the 16 guests were able to see everything from carrier flight operations to the ships’ combat direction center. Before leaving, they were able to watch a demonstration of the F/A-18 Super Hornet’s capabilities.

Kitty Hawk is nearly three months into the carrier's summer cruise from Yokosuka, Japan, in the U.S. Seventh Fleet area of operations.

The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is the largest carrier strike group in the Navy. It includes Kitty Hawk, the aircraft squadrons and staff of Carrier Air Wing 5, the guided-missile cruisers USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) and USS Cowpens (CG 63), and Destroyer Squadron 15 staff. The group's ships and destroyer squadron staff are based at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, and the air wing and staff are based at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan.

To find more news about the Kitty Hawk Strike Group, visit the Navy NewsStand at www.news.navy.mil/local/cv63/.

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